

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2295

As of February 20, 2018

Title: An act relating to encouraging the use of electric or hybrid-electric aircraft for regional air travel.

Brief Description: Encouraging the use of electric or hybrid-electric aircraft for regional air travel.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Slatter, Fey, McBride, Dolan, Macri and Doglio).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/07/18, 65-33.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/19/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to convene a work group to analyze the electric aircraft industry and to develop goals and a plan to encourage commercial hybrid-electric air travel.
- Revises WSDOT's general supervision over aeronautics to include aeronautics involving electrically powered aircraft.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Hayley Gamble (786-7452)

Background: WSDOT has general supervision over aeronautics within Washington. WSDOT is directed to encourage, foster, and assist in the development of aeronautics in Washington and to encourage the establishment of airports and air navigation facilities. Air navigation facilities are used to provide aid in air navigation and include any structures, mechanisms, lights, beacons, markers, communicating systems, or other instruments or devices used as an aid to safe taking-off, navigation, and landing of an aircraft or of the safe operation and maintenance of an airport. WSDOT is also directed to cooperate with and assist the federal government, municipalities of Washington, and other bodies in developing aeronautics.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The current Washington Aviation System Plan (Plan) includes discussion on emerging trends and issues in aircraft innovation that WSDOT anticipates will become relevant during the next 20 years. According to the Plan, electrically powered aircraft is one such innovation that is likely to become more widespread. Electric aircraft are allowable under Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) rules, and currently most are used primarily for experiments and demonstrations.

Summary of Bill: Specific language directing WSDOT to develop and sustain aeronautics involving electrically powered aircraft is added to WSDOT's statute on general supervision over aeronautics.

WSDOT is required to recommend goals for the use of electric or hybrid-electric aircraft in commercial air travel in Washington using solicited input from a work group WSDOT is required to convene. Recommended goals must be developed for the years 2030, 2040, and 2050, and must reflect progressive and substantial increases in the use of electric and hybrid-electric commercial aircraft. WSDOT must recommend these goals to the Legislature to consider for adoption.

The work group WSDOT must convene is comprised of representatives from several industries related to electric or hybrid-electric aircraft. The work group must analyze the current state of the electric aircraft industry and available infrastructure, determine feasibility of electric or hybrid-electric flight given current parameters such as battery technology and FAA regulations, and develop a sustainable plan to achieve the recommended goals. The work group must submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the transportation committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2019, and the chair of the work group must provide an interim report to the transportation committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2018. The work group expires on July 1, 2020.

WSDOT must report to the Legislature on Washington's progress toward achieving goals adopted by the Legislature every two years beginning on January 1, 2025.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: These are aspirational goals for stretch technology. This bill would give Washington State the ability to lead. There was much discussion in the House on this bill. This bill would allow a diversity of transportation options and help get cars off the road in the future. This bill addresses innovative technology and impacts on climate change. DOT would lead a workgroup of experts. Electric regional air transport could scale out with frequent affordable service with lower infrastructure costs. When a new propulsion arrives it can shake up a sector. Washington State could lead the world in the next chapter of aviation.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Vandana Slatter, Prime Sponsor; Allison Camden, WSDOT; Birger Steen, Zunom Aero; Brad Fenton, Zunum Aero.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.